Executive Order 07-03

State of Montana
Office of the Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER CONTINUING THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON FAMILIES

WHEREAS, strong and healthy families are the foundation of a healthy society; and

WHEREAS, families in their wondrous diversity provide the essential front line of education in passing on values, ethics, ideals and socially acceptable behaviors to the citizens of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, the modern-day family is experiencing a variety of pressures--social, cultural and economic--that can threaten its viability; and

WHEREAS, malfunctioning families affect all of us through the increased costs of public medical care and the justice and penal systems, and increased emotional and financial costs when new victims are created; and

WHEREAS, the roots of youth violence can be traced in large part to the breakdown of family units; and the education system and all of its members and constituencies are adversely affected by the disruptive and sometimes violent behavior of students, many of whom come from malfunctioning families; and

WHEREAS, single-parent families have a significantly higher rate of poverty than two-parent families and children from single-parent families are more likely to become school dropouts, juvenile delinquents, teen parents, and recipients of public assistance; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of children living in single-parent families has tripled, from 12 percent in 1970 to 36 percent in 2000; and

WHEREAS, problems in families such as domestic violence, abandonment, child abuse, and neglect tend to be perpetuated from generation to generation; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 50%of children born in the 1990's will spend a significant portion of their childhood in a home without a father, and research shows that the lack of a father in the home has a negative impact on children; and

WHEREAS, it is the stated statutory responsibility (Family Policy Act) that government constantly examine the impact of all its actions on the health of the family; and

WHEREAS, with appropriate intervention and support, troubled families can often be restored to their essential nurturing role in the upbringing of Montana's children, who are the classmates, neighbors, co-workers, and leaders of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Montana's families function well and especially deserve the support, positive

reinforcement and gratitude of their State Government, society at large, and their peers; and

WHEREAS, government alone clearly cannot and should not try to solve all of the current problems of troubled families; and

WHEREAS, life in a democracy carries with it many freedoms and benefits but also many responsibilities and duties; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interests of society that every child have an opportunity to grow in a secure and loving family environment; and

WHEREAS, the presence of two committed, involved parents contributes directly to better school performance, reduced substance abuse, less crime and delinquency, fewer emotional and other behavioral problems, less risk fo abuse or neglect, and lower risk of teen suicide; and

WHEREAS, resolution of these complex and troublesome family issues is an ongoing but vital process that will require the commitment and active participation of society as a whole as well as the assumption of responsibility by every individual.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Judy Martz, Governor of the State of Montana, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Sec. 2-15-122, MCA, do hereby continue the Governor's Council on Families.

I. PURPOSE: The Council will perform, in conjunction with existing resources within the Department of Public Health and Human Services, a variety of duties including, but not limited to:

A. creating widespread public forums to engage individual citizens and both private and public bodies for discussion and improvement of Montana families;

B. reviewing state policies, regulations and laws and advising the Governor to help strengthen independent families, as well as recommending new measures with the same goal;

C. examining issues such as tax reforms, juvenile justice and private job creation that also affect families;

D. acting as a catalyst for the stimulation of discussion and action by other institutions such as schools, local governments and faith-based groups to design and shape their activities and policies to aid the growth and maintenance of healthy, married, two-parent families;

E. encouraging state policy, community involvement, and faith-based participation in promoting responsible fatherhood;

F. facilitating the exchange among Montanans of successful family strategies; and

G. performing such other activities as may be appropriate to move Montana toward the goal of becoming forever family-friendly.

II. COMPOSITION:

The Council shall be composed of not more than 19 members who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The names and addresses of members are submitted by separate letter to the Secretary of State and the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

III. ADMINISTERING AGENCY:

The Department of Public Health and Human Services is designated as the organizational unit responsible for the administration and management of the Council.

IV. DURATION:

This Council shall remain in existence for two years from the effective date of this Order unless extended or terminated by subsequent Executive Order.

This Order is effective immediately.

GIVEN under my hand and the GREAT
SEAL of the State of Montana,
this ___ day of _____, 2003.

JUDY MARTZ, Governor

ATTEST:

BOB BROWN, Secretary of State